(c) The Minimum Wages Act, 1948 seeks to protect the interests of workers in the unorganised/sweated sector including agricultural workers. The minimum rates of basic agricultural wages in the Central sphere which were in the range of Rs. 26 to Rs. 58 per day in 1992 have been revised upward in the range of Rs. 67 to Rs. 101 per day vide Gazette Notification No. 1085 (E) dated 11-11-99. There is also a provision for variable dearness allowance (linked to consumer price index) which is revised from time to time and added to basic minimum wages.

Negative Growth in Employment

4193. SHRI SURESH PACHOURI : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is fact that there has been negative growth in employment in the public sector and a sharp decline in employment in the private sector during the last three years;

(b) if so, what are the reasons for this; and

(c) what action Government have taken/propose to take to enhance the generation of employment both in the public and private sectors?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI MUNI LALL) : (a) No Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The primary objective of the Ninth Plan is to generate greater productive employment in the growth process itself by concentrating on sectors, sub-sectors and technologies which are more labour intensive in regions characterised by higher rate of unemployment and under employment.

A Task Force under the Chairmanship of Dr. M.S. Ahluwalia, Member, Planning Commission has also been set up to look into the employment generation taking place and suggest measures to generate at least one hundred million jobs in a period of 10 years (Ten million jobs in each year).

Handicapped persons registered in Employment Exchanges

4194. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) the number of handicapped persons registered in different Employment Exchanges of Tamil Nadu till December, 1999;

(b) the number of handicapped persons provided with suitable jobs from the past three years;

(c) whether there is any vacancy in the reserved posts meant for handicapped persons; and

(d) whether there is any new proposal to create new avenues for the upliftment of the handicapped persons?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR (SHRI MUNI LALL) : (a) The number of handicapped job-seekers, all of whom are not necessarily unemployed, registered in different employment exchanges of Tamil Nadu as on 31-12-1997 (latest available), was of the order of 53,000.

(b) The number of handicapped job-seekers, placed in employment through employment exchanges in Tamil Nadu during the year 1995,1996 and 1997 was of the order of 900, 910 and 1000 respectively.

(c) Employment Exchanges sponsor the candidates as per the vacancies notified to them. Employers decide the reservation as per the existing instructions.

(d) There is a centrally sponsored scheme to help persons with disabilities in getting gainful employment either through Special Cells in normal Employment Exchanges or Special Employment Exchanges for persons with disabilities. The scheme is implemented through the Labour Department of State Government/UT Administrations. The financial assistance from the Central Government, the State Government and UT administration is given for running Special Employment Exchanges and Special Cells for persons with disabilities on 80% and 100% basis respectively. Grant-in-aid has been given for setting up/maintenance of Special Cells and Special Employment Exchanges in the country.

Ban on Strikes

4195. SHRI RAJNATH SINGH : Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state :

(a) whether the proposal for restricting all kinds of strikes, hartals, etc. is under consideration by amending certain labour laws;

(b) if so, the details thereof ;

(c) if not, whether amending the labour laws is on the cards in view of the economic reform process; and